U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) [ ] Elementary [] Middle [**X**] High [] K-12 [] Other
[] Charter [] Title I [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Betsy Bell

Official School Name: Cherokee Bend Elementary School

School Mailing Address:
4400 Fair Oaks Drive
Mountain Brook, AL 35213-3308

County: Jefferson State School Code Number*: 0020

Telephone: (205) 871-3595 Fax: (205) 877-8312

Web site/URL: www.mtnbrook.k12.al.us E-mail: bellb@mtnbrook.k12.al.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Charles Mason

District Name: Mountain Brook City Tel: (205) 871-4608

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Gary London

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*
Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.

6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.

7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:

4	Elementary schools
0	Middle schools
1	Junior high schools
1	High schools
0	Other
6	**TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 6473

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8403

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [X] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   19 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	**7**			0
K	31	31	62	**8**			0
1	40	36	76	**9**			0
2	37	30	67	**10**			0
3	43	43	86	**11**			0
4	40	39	79	**12**			0
5	43	43	86	**Other**			0
6	38	37	75				
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL					531

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0	% American Indian or Alaska Native
1	% Asian
0	% Black or African American
1	% Hispanic or Latino
0	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
98	% White
0	% Two or more races
100	**% Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 0 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	3
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	0
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	3
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	542
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.006
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	0.554

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0
Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 7 %

Total Number of Students Served: 37

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

5	Autism	1	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	9	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	9	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	10	Speech or Language Impairment
1	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	2	Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	2	0
Classroom teachers	31	0
Special resource teachers/specialists	17	0
Paraprofessionals	5	0
Support staff	10	0
Total number	65	0

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 **17 :1**

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	99%	98%	98%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	5%	7%	8%	9%	8%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
Total	**100**	%

PART III - SUMMARY

It's called the extra degree. Over the summer, Principal Betsy Bell discovered a motivational book that highlights the difference between 211 and 212 degrees. At 212 degrees, water goes from hot to boiling. 212 degrees, or the extra degree, has become our motto here at "The Bend." Here is a snapshot of what 212 degrees looks like at Cherokee Bend Elementary School.

We are located in a neighborhood where many children walk or ride their bikes with friends to and from school. A well-manicured landscape greets students and visitors. Situated amongst the colorful trees is a state-of-the-art ropes course that is used for the school's team-building adventure curriculum. Upon entering the front doors, one finds framed student artwork showcased throughout the brightly colored foyer. The pristine building is maintained by a dedicated custodial staff who are often seen high-fiving the students in the halls.

The classrooms have their own unique characteristics and are led by highly-qualified teachers. Our personnel includes thirty-one classroom teachers, administrators, media specialists, a technology coordinator, a counselor, art, music, and Spanish specialists, an adventure curriculum advisor, a reading coach, physical education coaches, academic interventionist, a registered nurse, gifted, and special education teachers. These 212 degree teachers can be seen recording podcasts for students, dropping pumpkins from the roof for a physics demonstration, coaching Scholars' Bowl, sponsoring a student-led environmental team, facilitating publication of the school newspaper, rolling dice for a math lesson, and reading picture books with students gathered around. We all work collaboratively to provide effective, challenging, and engaging instruction.

Our 531 students in kindergarten through sixth grade come from families who value education. With a large percentage of college-educated parents, expectations for student achievement are high. These students can be seen anchoring and producing the weekly broadcast, climbing on the wall of the ropes course, greeting visitors as ambassadors for the school, using student response systems to answer questions, participating in class discussions, publishing authentic writing, researching topics of interest, creating Web pages, reading in small groups, playing hands-on math games, and rocketing down the slides at recess. Our students are seen doing all of these activities while exhibiting Cherokee Bend's three core values: be safe, do your best, and value yourself and others.

We are writers, readers, mathematicians, actors, singers, athletes, thinkers, competitors, problem-solvers, creators. We are a family. We are boiling at 212 degrees. Life is good at "The Bend!"

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

As stated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation team in 2008, the challenge to the Mountain Brook Schools system, a historically high achieving school district, is continued improvement. Looking over the test data recorded in Cherokee Bend's data tables, an observer should note two points immediately. The achievement test scores, as recorded by both the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) and the Stanford Achievement Test (Stanford 10) assessments, are consistently very high. Perhaps more importantly, the data reflects an upward trend in student achievement relative to scores that were already high at the beginning of the five-year sample (or a four-year sample due to the fact that the ARMT was not given to grades three and five until the 2004-2005 school year). It is in analyzing these trends more deeply that the significance of these points can truly be appreciated.

The ARMT assessment data is clearly delineated in regard to the standards. Student scores on the ARMT are ranked on a scale from one to four, with a score of three indicating that a student met standards and a score of four indicating a student exceeded standards. Combining the scores of III and IV in the area of reading, the percentage of Cherokee Bend third graders who met or exceeded standards ranged from 98% in 2005 to 100% in 2008. Further disaggregation of the data reveals that 91% in 2005 and 95% in 2008 actually exceeded standards. It is also impressive to note the improvement from the beginning to the end of the sample period. Tracking this data in grades 4-6 reveals a similar consistency, with the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards in any given year or grade at no lower than 97%. This data suggests that, as an Alabama Reading Initiative school, Cherokee Bend students are learning the components of reading well enough to write detailed responses to comprehension questions. Since the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension, this data validates the effectiveness of the school's instruction with regard to Alabama reading standards and the Alabama Reading Initiative.

In the area of math, the third grade scores from the ARMT range from 97% meeting or exceeding standards in 2005 to 100% in 2008, with 93% and 94% exceeding standards, respectively. For any given grade during the sample period, fewer than 96% of students met or exceeded standards. Cherokee Bend explains this level of achievement by correlating the sample period to an increased emphasis on an "investigation-based" mathematics philosophy that highlights problem solving and a deep regard for the process underlying the algorithm. This focus enables students to respond more effectively to questions that prompt an explanation of the process on the way to an answer. Given that the sample size of the students tested within this time period averaged roughly 73 students, any fluctuation in percentage represents a small handful of students. Yet the consistency of scores, especially the improvement noted over time, represents the teachers' dedication to all students learning.

The Stanford 10 is a nationally norm-referenced assessment. The strength of our Stanford 10 scores corroborates the data from the ARMT (see attached data). The depth of content taught, paired with engaging enrichment opportunities, provide a foundation for students to truly apply their learning to new concepts encountered on a norm-referenced assessment. The Stanford 10 data speaks to two trends that Cherokee Bend finds particularly encouraging. The first is that grades three through six have each shown progress over a five-year period. This suggests that instruction is increasingly engaging and effective on a yearly basis. The second occurs by tracking a given class through four grade levels. Student achievement is consistently strong with a pattern that often suggests a group of students maximized learning from year to year. Thus, the trends would indicate that not only is instruction on a given grade level improving from year to year, but student learning also is further developing with each passing year. These trends are true in both language arts and math.

While Cherokee Bend relies on many indicators of student achievement, it is validating to have two standardized tests support the idea of consistent improvement in regard to the quality of our students' learning in the two content areas that provide the foundation for a child's education.

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Instructional decisions made at Cherokee Bend are data-driven. Using data that ranges from standardized assessments such as the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT), Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing (ADAW), Stanford Achievement Test 10th Edition (SAT 10) to formative assessments, the process of analyzing and disaggregating the data is continuous. The administration begins meeting with professional learning communities as early as the summer, and together they identify strengths, areas needing improvement, and general trends in the data.

This data is beneficial to teams in not only determining growth in last year's students but also in planning instruction for incoming students. For example, in reflecting on the 2007-2008 SAT 10, the third grade team adjusted their instructional strategies regarding word study for their incoming students. In addition to SAT 10 data, teachers in third through sixth grade are able to reflect on ARMT data. As a criterion referenced assessment, this data is particularly helpful in providing teachers feedback on student learning. In fifth grade, students take the ADAW. The fifth grade writing teacher is able to adjust instruction based on trends in student scores. Primary grades utilize data from Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to help identify students at risk in the area of reading. Analyzing this data early helps teachers prepare to address students' strengths and weaknesses as soon as the school year begins.

While ARMT, ADAW, and SAT10 are all examples of assessments that are important, there are many other assessment pieces that impact the decision making process. Professional learning communities create common assessments that enable teachers to collect formative data throughout the learning process. This directly guides instruction and ensures that all students' needs are being met. For example, the second grade team designed a formative assessment to determine whether their students were able tell time to the ten minute mark. Students who needed help with the concept were given small group instruction that quickly ensured they understood the concept and were prepared to learn how to tell time to the five minute mark. Growth can best be measured by collecting frequent data in regard to student progression toward specific goals. Equipped with current feedback, teachers and students use a systematic approach to improve teaching and learning.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Cherokee Bend has established a variety of means of communicating progress to all stakeholders. This communication ranges from conferences with individual students to reporting standardized testing results in the local newspaper. Be it communicating with students, parents, or the community, a large part of effectively educating all students is giving consistent and accurate performance feedback.

Communication begins with direct conversations with students. Teachers meet daily with individual students to discuss a book they are reading or a piece they are writing. Students have thirty minutes set aside daily to meet with teachers in focus groups. These groups, consisting of no more than six students, enable teachers to reinforce concepts from the curriculum and to discuss recent assessment results with students.

Assessment data is communicated throughout the learning process to give both students and parents full access to the most current and accurate feedback on student progress. Students and teachers collaborate on goals for student improvement and share these goals with parents during conferences in the fall and spring. All grade levels have conferences to communicate students' progress and third through sixth grade conferences are student-led. During the summer, parents receive standardized test scores along with letters explaining ways to interpret the information. The staff maintains an open-door policy whereby parents can e-mail, call, or schedule individual conferences almost daily.

The Mountain Brook community has based its development on the strength of its schools. Citizens are invited to attend monthly PTA meetings, read publications on the district and school level, and monitor progress of standardized test scores in the local newspaper and the Mountain Brook Schools' website. The people of this

community, students, parents, and concerned citizens, have invested heavily in the mission of educating every child. Cherokee Bend considers it a privilege and a duty to communicate the progress of this investment as often as possible.

4. **Sharing Success:**

In Mountain Brook Schools, grade levels meet district-wide to promote student learning. Additionally, teams are able to share successes and insights on ways to improve classroom instruction. Cherokee Bend has benefitted greatly from its participation in professional learning communities that are founded on the power of collaboration. Teachers meet bi-monthly to discuss common assessments and to share teaching methods. Our departmentalized fifth and sixth grade teachers, for example, meet not only as grade levels but also as district content teams to discuss student work and best practices. The principal and assistant principal meet twice a month with other district administrators to discuss curriculum and the general direction of schools.

Cherokee Bend teachers participate in regional and national professional development designed to improve student achievement. At a recent national conference, representatives from the school were able to boast about Cherokee Bend's successes regarding formative assessments, professional development strategies to engage adult learning, and effective ways to coach teachers. The structure of our professional learning communities allowed the representatives to share what they learned at the conference with teachers throughout the district.

In addition, some teachers develop avenues to share best practices by teaching at local universities. Our teachers share effective, challenging, and engaging lessons with local students and teachers who attend their classes. Student teachers are welcome at Cherokee Bend where they gain knowledge from our staff professionals by sharing experiences in teaching and learning.

This year, Cherokee Bend formed a partnership with Gibson Elementary from the Birmingham City School district. This partnership has provided our students and staff a unique opportunity to work with a school that has a different perspective in regard to cultural and socioeconomic demographics.

Cherokee Bend's contributions to other schools are anchored in our dedication to constantly reflecting on the processes that lead to student achievement. The Blue Ribbon process has given our school just such an opportunity. We would welcome other schools observing our teams in professional learning community meetings and classrooms where insights would be applied. Blue Ribbon status would certainly honor the hard work of all of our stakeholders.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

Students of Cherokee Bend are engaged in meaningful curriculum that is guided by a curriculum framework that meets the needs of all students. The framework, using the Alabama Course of Study as its foundation, is carefully aligned throughout grade levels to address and alleviate any potential gaps in student learning. Teachers analyze standards to determine student-centered learning targets. Through the use of effective, challenging, and engaging instruction, teachers ensure that students master the appropriate skills, methods, concepts, and perspectives. Students are encouraged through both the curriculum and instruction to become independent thinkers, problem solvers, and life-long learners.

The research-based language arts curriculum at Cherokee Bend is designed for students to progress from basic phonemic awareness and letter naming to novel studies with in-depth literary analysis. Reading and writing are viewed as reciprocal processes whereby students construct meaning and deepen their understanding of the vital role of language in learning. Differentiated instruction is delivered through a variety of methods to ensure that all students are engaged. These methods range from explicit instruction delivered one on one to literature circles with small groups, to authentic writing projects, and ultimately to independent workshops.

At Cherokee Bend, our mathematics curriculum is grounded in the research-based philosophy that students must first develop a secure foundation of number sense. Only then can students understand how mathematical ideas interconnect and build upon one another to produce a coherent whole. Teachers challenge students with open-ended problems and hands-on activities that provide opportunities to explain their thinking and justify their answers. Investigations such as these enable students to recognize mathematics in contexts beyond the classroom.

The science curriculum at Cherokee Bend uses standards that are designed to stimulate student curiosity. Teachers understand the value of scientific inquiry and create learning environments that motivate students to think both critically and creatively. Students, by participating in collaborative experiments, projects, and activities, develop an understanding of scientific themes and principles. The scientifically literate individual is more likely to face confidently and deal effectively with the challenges of an ever-changing global society.

The social studies curriculum instills in students productive and responsible citizenship. They gain this through the interrelated examination of economics, geography, history, and political science. Field trips, guest speakers, novel studies, community service projects, and simulations enhance student learning and are just a few of the ways students are engaged in this curriculum. Students are equipped with an appreciation of the past, an understanding of the present, and a vision for the future empowering them to become active participants in society.

Cherokee Bend believes the fine arts have intrinsic value, and they are included in an integrated, interdisciplinary program. Students attend weekly music and art classes taught by highly-qualified teachers. Art instruction includes art history, criticism, production, and aesthetics. Using this knowledge, students create original artwork that is publicly displayed. In music, explorations of musical genres and skills culminate in thematic performances throughout the school year. The fine arts stimulate imagination, creativity, and cognitive development.

Spanish at Cherokee Bend is a total curricular experience that weaves together communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and community. Students engage in role-play activities, authentic projects, listening centers, cultural experiences, and games facilitated by a highly qualified Spanish teacher. The Spanish program creates a cooperative, nurturing environment that encourages language learners to be risk-takers, actively exploring the language and culture.

Cherokee Bend meets the demands of high standards by engaging students in active learning through which they not only acquire knowledge but also learn to apply it in meaningful ways. Phillip Schlechty's research-based design qualities include: content and substance, organization of knowledge, product focus, clear and compelling product standards, protection from adverse consequences for initial failure, affirmation of the significance of performance, affiliation, novelty and variety, choice, and authenticity. These qualities are the foundation for instruction across all content areas. The faculty, parents, and community collaborate to ensure that all students attain the knowledge and skills necessary for successful life-long learning.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

Cherokee Bend has an obligation to our students to engage and challenge them by integrating technology into every aspect of their education. It is becoming increasingly difficult to be a life-long learner without a firm grasp of the potential of technology. Therefore, our goal is to empower students to be technologically fluent digital citizens.

The technology curriculum at Cherokee Bend is an integrated interdisciplinary program that aligns to the Alabama standards and to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. These standards are technology operations and concepts; digital citizenship; research and information fluency; communication and collaboration; critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making; and creativity and innovation.

For example, kindergarten students begin by learning terminology and applications related to a variety of technologies. By third grade, students are using technology to locate information on the Internet, to e-mail, to create original multimedia presentations, and to blog about books they have read. Sixth graders produce podcasts, Web pages, digital newspapers, and blogs about current events. Every Friday, the school views a Cherokee Bend broadcast that is written, recorded, and produced by students in our school studio.

The technology coordinator for Cherokee Bend meets with teachers regularly and collaborates with them to design authentic projects that integrate technology into curricular studies. He provides on-going teacher training in technological developments such as blogs, podcasts, and Wikis that teachers use to communicate.

All classrooms are equipped with sound-enhancement systems, DVD players, document cameras, ceiling-mounted data projectors, InterWrite Pads, and multiple computers. The fifth grade science teacher is able to enhance the dissection of a frog by showing students a virtual dissection before using the document camera to guide the actual dissection. Second grade teachers use the InterWrite pads to model the revision process in writing. In addition to these tools, the school has a computer lab, three laptop carts, school-wide wireless connectivity, and several sets of Classroom Response Systems. All of these tools allow teachers to incorporate authentic technology into engaging instruction. Producing students who are ready for 21st-century challenges is the goal of all instruction.

4. **Instructional Methods:**

Cherokee Bend utilizes a variety of structures to support differentiation. The use of professional learning communities is just one of such approaches to meet the vast range of learning styles. A professional learning community is a group of school staff who are united in their commitment to student learning. They share a vision, work and learn collaboratively, visit and review other classrooms, and participate in decision making. While standards are not negotiable, the way a student arrives at knowledge can be individualized. Differentiation strategies include conferences with individual students, small group instruction, challenging extensions, and student choice.

Within professional learning communities, teachers also design common formative and summative assessments. Teachers work collaboratively to disaggregate data collected from such assessments in order to effectively

differentiate instruction and form intervention and enrichment groups. These groups are facilitated daily by the most appropriate highly qualified teachers. Groups are fluid based on needs and achievement.

In the event that a student does not respond to intervention, he or she is referred to a Building Based Student Support Team (BBSST) that offers strategies and accommodations for teachers to use in their classroom instruction. In addition to these accommodations, the student receives intervention administered by our academic interventionist.

If a student needs further intervention, he or she is referred for special education services. Our special education staff meets students' needs by providing services within the regular classroom and the resource room. Through collaboration with families and teachers, special education teachers make informed decisions about how to best serve students in the least restrictive environment.

Students who need additional academic challenges are referred for gifted education services. This Program for Academically Gifted Education (PAGE) provides students with opportunities to use creative thinking and problem-solving abilities applied to authentic situations. For example, fourth grade students created a Website to educate other students on the 2008 presidential election. As a whole, our school uses all available resources to ensure that all children receive an effective, challenging, and engaging education.

5. **Professional Development:**

At Cherokee Bend, professional learning takes many forms and draws on the perspectives, talents, and contributions of the educators in our building. We believe professional development that is on going and job-embedded leads to higher levels of student achievement.

Here at Cherokee Bend, teachers collaborate to share expertise and improve instruction. Monthly faculty meetings are designed to feature pertinent professional development linked directly to student achievement. At the January meeting, grade levels shared common assessments and ideas for looking at student work. Every third Tuesday, teachers meet before school for "Breakfast at the Bend." At these morning gatherings, teachers share ideas, strategies, and resources with colleagues. For example, two teachers shared techniques for helping facilitate student-led conferences. At another breakfast, special education teachers shared strategies to differentiate instruction for different learning styles. Although participation is voluntary, these workshops are well attended due to the camaraderie felt among the staff and the teachers' genuine desire to learn from one another.

In weekly professional learning community meetings, teachers discuss strategies to help students meet established goals and state standards. Additionally, through the use of common formative and summative assessments, teachers are able to analyze student work and ultimately to improve instruction. These meetings provide the ideal platform for teachers to share strategies and skills they have learned. Professional development attended throughout the summer by different team members is shared and applied to student learning. Over the summer, teachers participated in professional development programs on technology, reading instruction, and developing assessments. Professional learning communities have given teachers a vehicle to meet and purposefully apply and share information that directly affects student learning. Teachers leave meetings with better ideas to create engaging lessons, assessments to measure learning, and insight to improve their classroom instruction.

When asked, many teachers at Cherokee Bend report that the professional development plan both for the school and the system were crucial factors in their decision to join our team. This devotion to professional development enables them to help their students grow while they also grow as educators.

6. **School Leadership:**

The administration at Cherokee Bend believes strongly in balanced leadership and works diligently to achieve it. The principal, Betsy Bell, facilitates communication between stakeholders as an integral part of her leadership role. Rather than a hierarchy in which policies are developed and sent as mandates to the faculty, the administration insists that all stakeholders are represented in the decision-making process.

Cherokee Bend is comprised of various committees and opportunities for all faculty members to share their thoughts and opinions. These include an open-door policy with the administration, grade-level professional learning communities, and monthly staff meetings. Additionally, a representative from each department meets monthly as a design team, whose primary goal is to create SMART goals (specific and strategic, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound) as part of the school improvement plan. This process provides departments a vehicle for direct input on items such as curriculum, instruction, procedures, and other school-wide initiatives. These representatives are also liaisons between individual professional learning communities and the administration. When a professional learning community convenes, the agenda includes progress made toward SMART goals, academic concerns for individual students, and opportunities to share ideas for improved instruction.

Improving student achievement is at the heart of every decision made at Cherokee Bend. Parents are invited to monthly PTA meetings with the administration to discuss ways they can support instruction through time and money. This year, the PTA funded a laptop cart for the fourth grade that has provided students the opportunity to use technology in solving authentic problems. Students' voices are heard through monthly ambassador meetings in which the administration eats lunch with students and asks for opinions and suggestions regarding ways to improve the school. Students and parents complete annual surveys detailing the effectiveness of instruction, policies, programs, resources, and relationships. Survey data is used to evaluate ways to improve student achievement.

The leadership at Cherokee Bend works daily to ensure that the culture of the school fosters a sense of community and cooperation. The administration's optimistic approach encourages new and challenging innovations to promote and maintain student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition/ Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	100	100	100	97	
Exceeds Standards	94	91	97	93	
Number of students tested	81	85	72	67	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The State of Alabama began using the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) in the spring of 2004. During that initial year, only the fourth and sixth graders at Cherokee Bend participated in the assessment.

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	100	100	100	98	
Exceeds Standards	95	93	96	91	
Number of students tested	81	85	72	67	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The State of Alabama began using the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) in the spring of 2004. During that initial year, only the fourth and sixth graders at Cherokee Bend participated in the assessment.

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition/ Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	98	98	99	100	99
Exceeds Standards	93	93	94	97	93
Number of students tested	87	76	66	60	67
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition/ Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	99	99	100	97	100
Exceeds Standards	94	96	94	90	81
Number of students tested	87	76	66	60	67
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	96	99	97	98	
Exceeds Standards	92	96	91	90	
Number of students tested	76	68	67	72	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The State of Alabama began using the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) in the spring of 2004. During that initial year, only the fourth and sixth graders at Cherokee Bend participated in the assessment.

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition/ Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	99	100	97	99	
Exceeds Standards	96	96	93	93	
Number of students tested	76	68	67	72	
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

The State of Alabama began using the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) in the spring of 2004. During that initial year, only the fourth and sixth graders at Cherokee Bend participated in the assessment.

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 6 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition/ Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	100	97	99	100	94
Exceeds Standards	89	91	84	95	83
Number of students tested	72	64	75	83	54
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 6 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Edition/ Publisher: Harcourt

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds Standards	100	97	100	98	94
Exceeds Standards	96	92	96	96	94
Number of students tested	72	65	75	83	53
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
3. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes: